

of 1997 prohibits any physician who forms a private contract with a senior from filing any Medicare reimbursement claims for two years. As a practical matter, this means that seniors cannot form private contracts for health care services.

Seniors may wish to use their own resources to pay for procedures or treatments not covered by Medicare, or to simply avoid the bureaucracy and uncertainty that comes when seniors must wait for the judgment of a Center from Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) bureaucrat before finding out if a desired treatment is covered.

Seniors' right to control their own health care is also being denied due to the Social Security Administration's refusal to give seniors who object to enrolling for Medicare Part A Social Security benefits. This not only distorts the intent of the creators of the Medicare system; it also violates the promise represented by Social Security. Americans pay taxes into the Social Security Trust Fund their whole working lives and are promised that Social Security will be there for them when they retire. Yet, today, seniors are told that they cannot receive these benefits unless they agree to join an additional government program!

At a time when the fiscal solvency of Medicare is questionable, to say the least, it seems foolish to waste scarce Medicare funds on those who would prefer to do without Medicare. Allowing seniors who neither want nor need to participate in the program to refrain from doing so will also strengthen the Medicare program for those seniors who do wish to participate in it. Of course, my bill does not take away Medicare benefits from any senior. It simply allows each senior to choose voluntarily whether or not to accept Medicare benefits or to use his own resources to obtain health care.

Forcing seniors into government programs and restricting their ability to seek medical care free from government interference infringes on the freedom of seniors to control their own resources and make their own health care decisions. A woman who was forced into Medicare against her wishes summed it up best in a letter to my office, "... I should be able to choose the medical arrangements I prefer without suffering the penalty that is being imposed." I urge my colleagues to protect the right of seniors to make the medical arrangements that best suit their own needs by cosponsoring the Seniors' Health Care Freedom Act.

#### INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL WAR POWERS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 5, 2011*

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce a bill that will create a national commission to examine fundamental questions regarding national security, civil liberties, and the rule of law. These include: What actions are permitted in the name of national security? What rights and liberties should a free people demand? Can the so-called Imperial Presidency be controlled?

These questions take on greater significance every year. The power of the Presidency seems to grow and grow under both parties, and the ability of our democratic institutions to constrain it seems more and more uncertain.

In the current political atmosphere, I believe that an expert commission with appointments made by both branches and individuals of both parties would be uniquely positioned to evaluate the issues and propose steps that the Congress can take to enhance both our liberty and our security for generations to come.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE BALANCED BUDGET CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

**HON. BOB GOODLATTE**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 5, 2011*

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to reintroduce legislation that will amend the United States Constitution to force Congress to rein in spending by balancing the federal budget.

We have a spending addiction in Washington, D.C., and it has proven to be an addiction that Congress cannot control on its own and which is bringing dire consequences. We have gone in a few short years from a deficit of billions of dollars to a deficit of trillions of dollars. We are printing money at an unprecedented pace, which presents serious risks of massive inflation. Our national debt recently surpassed an astonishing \$14 trillion and continues to rapidly increase, along with the waste associated with paying the interest on that debt.

Our first Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, warned of the consequences of out-of-control debt when he wrote: "To preserve [the] independence [of the people,] we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. We must make our election between economy and liberty, or profusion and servitude." Unfortunately, it increasingly appears that Congress has chosen the latter path.

Our current Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, issued a similar warning when she recently declared: "I think that our rising debt levels [sic] poses a national security threat, and it poses a national security threat in two ways. It undermines our capacity to act in our own interest, and it does constrain us where constraint may be undesirable. And it also sends a message of weakness internationally." Despite these warnings, Congress has refused to address this crisis.

Congress' spending addiction is not a partisan one. It reaches across the aisle and afflicts both parties, which is why neither party has been able to master it. We need outside help. We need pressure from outside Congress to force us to rein in this out-of-control behavior. We need a balanced budget amendment to our Constitution.

That is why I am introducing this legislation, which garnered 179 bipartisan cosponsors in the 111th Congress. This bill would amend the Constitution to require that total spending for any fiscal year not exceed total receipts and require the President to propose budgets to Congress that are balanced each year. It would also provide an exception in times of

war and during military conflicts that pose imminent and serious military threats to national security.

Furthermore, the legislation would make it harder to increase taxes by requiring that legislation to increase revenue be passed by a true majority of each chamber and not just a majority of those present and voting. Finally, the bill requires a 3/5 majority vote for any increases in the debt limit.

Our federal government must be lean, efficient and responsible with the dollars that our nation's citizens worked so hard to earn. We must work to both eliminate every cent of waste and squeeze every cent of value out of each dollar our citizens entrust to us. Families all across our nation understand what it means to make tough decisions each day about what they can and cannot afford and government officials should be required to exercise similar restraint when spending the hard-earned dollars of our nation's citizens.

By amending the Constitution to require a balanced budget, we can force the Congress to control spending, paving the way for a return to surpluses and ultimately paying down the national debt, rather than allow big spenders to lead us further down the road of chronic deficits and in doing so leave our children and grandchildren saddled with debt that is not their own.

This concept is not new—49 out of 50 states have a balanced budget requirement.

Our nation faces many difficult decisions in the coming years, and Congress will face great pressure to spend beyond its means rather than to make the difficult decisions about spending priorities. Unless Congress is forced to make the decisions necessary to create a balanced budget, it will always have the all-too-tempting option of shirking this responsibility. The Balanced Budget Constitutional amendment is a common sense approach to ensure that Congress is bound by the same fiscal principles that guide America's families each day.

I urge support of this important legislation.

#### THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY PROTECTION ACT

**HON. DAVID DREIER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 5, 2011*

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, the roots of our broken immigration and employer verification system can be traced to three underlying factors: too many unreliable documents, including the Social Security card; a faulty employment verification system; and lax enforcement. The cornerstone of any immigration and border security reform plan must include an effective employment verification system and enhanced enforcement of our immigration laws. My bill, H.R. 98, the Illegal Immigration Enforcement and Social Security Protection Act, provides a strong foundation on which to build upon.

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act created the I-9 system for employers to verify the work authorization status of prospective employees. Currently, there are 26 documents that individuals can use in 102 different combinations to establish work authorization status in the U.S. While well intentioned, this